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SUBJECT: EMBASSY SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM 2009 (QATAR)

REF: SECSTATE 10843

11. Proposal for fellow: "Senior Advisor to the Qatari Ministry of Environment"

-- Embassy Doha proposes placing a USG fellow for a minimum three month timeframe at the newly established Ministry of Environment in Qatar. The fellow would advise the Minister and senior staff on all matters pertaining to establishment of a successful environmental ministry. Specifically, he/she will assist in the development of a multi-year action plan for environmental management in the country. Moreover, the fellow will advise the Embassy on, and help formulate a plan for, strengthening U.S.-Qatar environmental collaboration.

-- Minister of Environment Abdullah Bin Mubarak Al-Midhadhi told Ambassador in January he would welcome such a fellow, and the Ministry's Technical Affairs Director Yousuf Al-Hamar confirmed to Econoff Fabrycky February 26 that the ministry is highly interested in having such a fellow, and willing to provide the financial resources to make it happen.

-- The fellow would have an office at the Qatar Ministry of the Environment and spend most time there. However, he/she would also have office space at the Embassy.

-- Timeframe: Post proposes a three month (or more) assignment, starting September 27, 2009. (Note: This is after the summer and Ramadan/Eid holidays, and ensures that most staff will be present.)

-- A successful fellow will possess a broad range of experience in environmental management, particularly the effective establishment and operation of bureaucracies to deal with the environment. The candidate must be a self-starter, good at inter-personal communication, and able to work effectively while immersed in a cross-cultural environment. Arabic language skills are useful, but not required.

-- A senior manager from EPA with some international experience might be a good fit, though other agencies may have skilled candidates to offer as well.

-- A security clearance is not required.

12. Background and Description of Work Projects

-- Embassy Doha has never hosted a fellow under this program. Qatar is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (per priority consideration noted in reftel). Placing a USG fellow with the Qatari Ministry of Environment would help support U.S. science diplomacy with the Muslim world and help to strengthen a key bilateral strategic partnership. Qatar is the world's wealthiest country on a per capita basis, and the U.S. has strong interests in Qatar in the political, economic, military, and education fields.

Furthering environmental cooperation through this fellowship would enhance U.S. soft power in Qatar. Moreover, Qatar increasingly has the vision and resources to play a leading regional role, and establishing Qatar as a good model of environmental protection would have salutary regional benefits as well.

-- The USG has already cooperated in some technical fields with the GOQ on the environment. For example:

A) National Park Service employees have advised the GOQ on the establishment and management of a major national park in the country's south (not yet implemented).

B) In January 2009 Qatar hosted a State Department-sponsored workshop on Hazardous Waste Management which was led by EPA facilitators.

C) NASA is in discussion with the ministry on placement of a ground monitoring station in Qatar.

-- Protection of the environment, as a core government responsibility, is still in its infancy in Qatar. However, the ruling family and Qatari elite are increasingly aware of the need for effective environmental management and protection as the country develops. One of the four pillars of Qatar's recently released government strategy ("Qatar National Vision 2030") is "Environmental Development: Management of the Environment such that there is harmony between economic growth, social development and environmental protection." The Qatar National Vision 2030 document can be viewed at www.gsdp.gov.qa.

-- The Ministry was officially established on July 1, 2008 as part of a broader cabinet reorganization. Before that it was a smaller organization known as the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves (SCENR). The Qatari Cabinet will (reportedly by April at the latest) task the Ministry with its official organizational chart and responsibilities. It is probably too late for the USG to influence the construction of such a line-and-block chart, but the major work of "putting flesh on the bones" of this structure remains to be done.

-- Note: The former head of SCENR and 3 senior staff still with the ministry attended a USG/MEPI-sponsored Institutional Strengthening Workshop in Amman in May 2008. The EPA-led workshop gave participants tools for the creation of a strategic vision and accompanying road-map and implementation plans. The Qatari delegation found the workshop very useful and was interested in USG support for implementing such a process in Qatar. The proposed fellow's work in Qatar is a natural follow-on to this workshop, to provide face-to-face advice and support as Qatar's Environment Ministry builds and implements a strategic vision and workplan.

-- The fellow's specific program of work will be determined closer to the date of arrival, and in consultation between the fellow, Embassy, and Ministry. However, responsibilities could cover review and advice on: legal and regulatory matters, staff recruitment and training, inter and intra-governmental strategies and procedures, local implementation of international commitments/treaties, hosting of conferences and workshops, etc. Crucially, Post would like the fellow to lay the groundwork for signature of an effective Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or other agreement between the USG and GOQ which would facilitate full-spectrum environmental cooperation. Bureaucratic and management experience, coupled with broad environmental management knowledge, are more important for this assignment than technical/scientific knowledge of any one area.

-- While the fellow would be mostly working with the Ministry of Environment, the fellow should also spend time liaising with other environmental stakeholders in Qatar, including: international oil companies, the six U.S. universities at Qatar's Education City, Qatar University (which recently started an Environmental Department), UNESCO's regional office, and the handful of civil society organizations

dealing with the environment.

-- Minister of Environment Al-Midhadhi does not have a background in the environment, but he has high-level connections that ensure his ideas and ministry are listened to (he was the Heir Apparent's Chief of Staff before coming to the Ministry). He is personally eager to establish his ministry and its work program, and would welcome official USG assistance and advice through this fellowship.

13. Administrative Support

-- Post is unable to provide housing to a fellow but the Ministry of Environment will provide (pay for) housing in either a corporate suite or 4-star or better hotel (e.g., the Movenpick Tower hotel is close to the ministry and has been used frequently by USG visitors).

-- The nature of the proposal requires that the fellow will work full-time out of the Ministry. The Ministry will provide the fellow with dedicated office space. However, post will provide office space where the fellow can periodically work at the Embassy.

-- The Ministry could possibly provide a car/driver for residence to work transportation (unconfirmed). Other transportation options would include long-term car rental by the fellow, paid for by the sending agency. Transportation outside of Doha will probably not be required but if so (e.g., visit to potential national park sites), the ministry would provide transport.

-- The Ministry can provide translators when needed (e.g., the Minister does not speak English and unless the fellow has good Arabic skills, translation would be needed in meetings with him). This would usually take the form of one of the many bilingual ministry employees providing informal translation.

14. RSO concurs with this assignment, and will make security approval of housing options as they are determined.

15. Embassy Point of Contact

-- (Primary) Economic Officer David Fabrycky; Tel: 974-496-6731; Fax: 974-496-6709; Email: FabryckyDA@state.gov.
-- Note: Fabrycky will leave post in July 2009. Successor is Erik Wahlstrom who will report in September 2009.
-- (Backup) Political-Economic Chief Steve Rice; Tel: 974-496-6715; Fax: 974-496-6709; Email: RiceSC@state.gov.

LeBaron